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SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/RUS AND EEB/TRA/OTP (BJSILER)
MONTREAL PLEASE PASS TO USICAO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAIR ECON ICAO RS
SUBJECT: MONTREAL CONVENTION DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: STATE 27782

¶1. (SBU) We shared reftel information regarding the ratification of
the Montreal Convention of 1999 with diplomats in the MFA's
Department of North America Affairs and with civil aviation
officials at the Ministry of Transportation (MOT).

¶2. (SBU) Elena Mikheeva, Deputy Head of the Air Services Division in
the MOT's Department of State Policy in Civil Aviation, accepted the
information. However, she said she could not offer any substantive
response. The issue would need to be discussed with senior MOT
officials. Separately, Oleg Demidov, Deputy Director of the MOT's
Department of State Policy in Civil Aviation, told us that
ratification of the Montreal Convention was a sensitive issue, but
said he also was not authorized to elaborate on Russia's specific
concerns, noting that the issue could only be discussed at the
Deputy Minister level or higher.

¶3. (SBU) While Russian officials would not share with us the GOR's
specific concerns with the Montreal Convention, Russian legal and
aviation experts have noted that the convention's liability
provisions for passenger injuries and fatalities, and compensation
for delayed passengers, are far more generous than current Russian
law. Hence, scholars have noted that ratification of the convention
would require significant changes to Russian aviation and insurance
law, and would likely increase insurance costs for Russian airlines
at a time when many are struggling to survive the global economic
crisis.

¶4. (SBU) We will continue to seek a more senior-level meeting at MOT
to ascertain the GOR's specific concerns with the Montreal
Convention.

BEYRLE